

A SPECIAL REPORT FOR LONG TERM CARE ADMINISTRATORS

August 2006

Epidemics of influenza typically occur during the winter months in temperate regions and have been responsible for an average of approximately 36,000 deaths per year in the United States. Health Care Personnel (HCP) can either acquire influenza from patients or transmit influenza to patients and other staff. Despite this, vaccination coverage among HCP remains low at less than 50%. Because HCP provide care to patients who are at high risk for complications of influenza, HCP should be considered high priority for expanding influenza vaccine use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers updated infection control measures for the prevention and control of influenza in health care facilities at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcarefacilities.htm>

IMPACT OF HCP INFLUENZA VACCINATION IN HEALTH CARE SETTINGS

Vaccination of HCP reduces transmission of influenza in health care settings, staff illness and absenteeism, and influenza-related morbidity and mortality among persons at increased risk for severe influenza illness.

STAFF ILLNESS AND ABSENTEEISM

In one trial conducted by the CDC, HCP who received the influenza vaccination had 28% fewer documented lost work days attributable to respiratory infections. HCP who received the vaccine also tended to have fewer total respiratory illnesses.



COST EFFECTIVENESS OF INFLUENZA VACCINE

Studies show that vaccinating adults less than 65 years of age can reduce both direct medical costs and indirect costs related to absenteeism resulting in:

- 13%-44% fewer health care provider visits;
- 18%-28% fewer days working with reduced effectiveness and;
- 25% decrease in antibiotic use.

Among healthy persons aged 18-64 years, influenza vaccinations can save an estimated \$60-\$4,000 per illness, depending on the cost of vaccine, the influenza attack rate, and vaccine effectiveness against flu-like illnesses.

It is important for health care professionals to get vaccinated because during community influenza outbreaks studies have shown that:

- admitting patients infected with influenza has led to transmission of the disease – including transmission from staff to patients;
- transmission of influenza among medical staff causes absenteeism and considerable disruption of health services; and
- long term care facilities with high patient influenza vaccination levels, and where more than 60% of the staff had been vaccinated, have less influenza-related mortality and illness.

Influenza Vaccine Information for Long Term Care Administrators

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all health care personnel (HCP) with direct contact to high-risk groups should receive an annual influenza vaccination. Either the inactivated influenza vaccine or the live attenuated influenza vaccine may be used to vaccinate most HCP.

CDC recommends that all HCP be annually vaccinated against influenza.

- The influenza shot, which is also referred to as the inactivated influenza vaccine, may be used by all HCP and is preferred for vaccinating those who have close contact with severely immunosuppressed persons (e.g., patients with hematopoietic stem cell transplants) during those periods in which the immunosuppressed person requires care in a protective environment.
- The nasal spray vaccine, which is also referred to as the live attenuated vaccine (LAIV), may be given to HCP younger than 50 years of age who do not have contraindications to receiving the nasal spray vaccine. This includes HCP who take care of immunocompromised patients who do not require care in a protective environment. If HCP who care for severely immunocompromised patients in protected environments receive LAIV, then they should not care for these patients for 7 days following immunization.

Influenza Clinic Providers

IVNA

5008 Monument Avenue
Richmond, VA 23230
804-355-7100
800-222-INVA
www.inva.org

Maxim

Maxim Healthcare Services
7227 Lee Deforest Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
1-800-79-MAXIM
www.maxhealth.com

Ukrops Pharmacy

Short Pump
804-364-1487
Chesterfield Towne Center
804-379-9536
www.ukrops.com

INOVA Health System

703-204-3339
www.inova.org

Strategies to Increase Vaccination Rates Among Health Care Personnel

- ▶ Select a leader to administer this immunization program, and obtain the support of top management
- ▶ Create and adopt a policy statement affirming institutional commitment to increasing HCP vaccination rates
- ▶ Provide education and re-education and use every possible means to deliver messages
- ▶ Make the influenza vaccine easily accessible and remove cost barriers for personnel
- ▶ Audit immunization programs and provide feedback to key personnel
- ▶ Repeat the influenza immunization program annually